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WIMMERA RYEGRASS

(Lolium Subulatum)

THE WONDERFUL LATE AUTUMN, WINTER, AND SPRING FODDER FOR DRY, ARID DISTRICTS WITHOUT IRRIGATION

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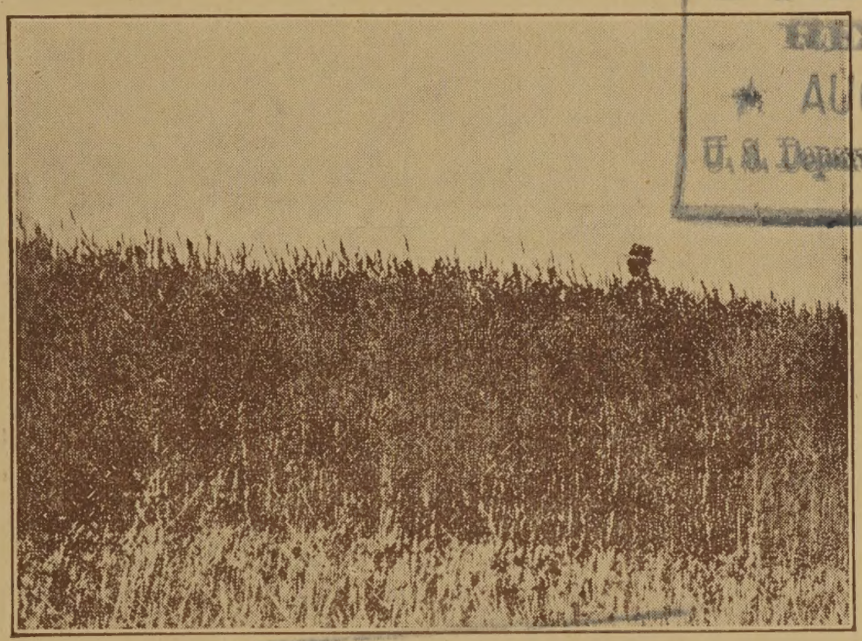

POINTS OF INTEREST ABOUT LOLIUM SUBULATUM

1. Will double the carrying capacity of the present Wimmera and Mallee lands, and similar country in South Australia and Western Australia.
2. Once sown, does not require re-seeding, even though the land is broken up for cereal crops. An occasional scarifying will maintain it at full productivity.
3. It can be easily stripped for seed.
4. It retains its seed well attached to the dry straw, hence the dry feed is nutritious.
5. It makes first-class ensilage.
6. It will furnish, if required, self-sown hay of excellent quality, equal in quantity to a stubble-sown crop of oats.
7. It is better cut with a mower rather than with a binder.

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SOME NOTES ON WIMMERA RYEGRASS

(Lolium Subulatum.)

The Solution of the pasture problem for Dry, Arid Districts without irrigation

1. Q. What is Wimmera Ryegrass?

A. It is an **annual** species of **highly drought-resistant** Italian Ryegrass of **high feeding value,** with strong re-seeding qualities which manifested itself in the Wimmera some years ago, and which has been identified as being synonymous with the Lolium Subulatum indigenous to the Mediterranean Littoral. The root system is fibrous and extremely vigorous, but is not persistent, and the plant is propagated by seed only. The **seed is very similar** in appearance **to** that of Italian Ryegrass, although minus the awns so prominent in the latter, and more resembles that of Lolium Temulentum or Drake. The plant has a high carrying capacity, and its **palatability** is so **attractive** to stock that they will leave other pastures for it. Once established, it is thoroughly permanent, and will reappear year after year.

2. Q. What is it used for?

A. Wimmera Ryegrass may be **grazed, cut for green** feed, or, if desired, the last growth may be **cut for hay.** The latter is of first quality, and of excellent feeding value.

3. Q. Where can it be grown?

A. It seems to be adaptable to most conditions, and is apparently thoroughly hardy to even comparatively cold climates, such as Gippsland. That it does well under such conditions and on poor quality land has already been proved by the experience of Mr. Robert Browne at Tarwin, but whether it is superior to Perennial Ryegrass in this class of climate on good land has yet to be proved. Its chief value, however, is on low value types of red soil, and on the classes of country in the Wimmera and Mallee of Victoria, which are of too poor quality to be productive to Wheat, and to similar country in South Australia and Western Australia, and its use should be confined to this grade of land. Owing to its highly drought-resistant character, it is extremely valuable for hot, dry localities without irrigation facilities, as witness the experience of Mr. Wm. Hedges and Mr S. K. Ruddock, in Western Australia.

4. Q. What is the best soil and preparation?

A. As previously stated, Wimmera Ryegrass **should not** be sown on high priced black Wheat land or on good quality soil. No special soil preparation appears to be needed, providing the ground is harrowed or is sufficiently loose to make a seed bed so that the roots can get a hold. With heavy land or stiff soil, some further preparation of the ground will, however, be necessary.

5. When and how is it sown?

A. The best time for sowing the seed is with the first Autumn rains, but Wimmera Ryegrass may be sown **from March** until about the **middle of June.** Owing to the habit and nature of the plant, later seeding would hardly be advisable except in very moist districts, when early Spring sowings may be successful.

The seed, when sown alone, is broadcasted, in which case from **15** to **20 lbs per acre** is sufficient, or it may be sown with a cereal crop on land which it is proposed to rest. In such a case, a **light seeding only** is necessary, otherwise the cereal crop may be interfered with, and under these conditions about **2 to 4 lbs.** of seed per acre will be found sufficient.

6. Q. Will it become a pest?

A. The main objection raised is that it is hard to kill Wimmera Ryegrass when cropping, and it is certainly a strong grower. With a little care, it **may,** however, **be easily controlled,** especially where a cereal crop has been sown. Feed the grass off well with sheep, fire the paddock if the stubble is sufficient, and then cultivate lightly. This will bury the remaining seed, and cause it to germinate after rain. Then work the fallow well while the grass is small, and prevent it from reseeding again. Thus it will be understood that when it is desired to eradicate Wimmera Ryegrass, it is a sound and reliable method to encourage germination of the seed early, and to kill the plants before they have secured a firm hold.

7. Q. Does it do well in mixture?

A. Yes, it has already been thoroughly demonstrated that Wimmera Ryegrass will do very well in conjunction with a cereal crop, such as Wheat. Apart from cereals, in districts with a low average rainfall, Wimmera Ryegrass should give excellent **results** in conjunction **with** either **Subterranean** Clover or **Sweet** Clover. When sowing with the former, use **12 lbs.** of Wimmera Ryegrass and **2 lbs.** of Subterranean Clover per acre. When sowing with Sweet Clover, use **4 lbs.** of the Clover and **10 lbs.** of Wimmera Ryegrass per acre. The first mixture will give Winter and Spring feed, while with the second the Wimmera Ryegrass will provide late Autumn, Winter and early Spring feed, by which time the Sweet Clover will be ready, and will maintain the pasture throughout the late Spring, Summer and Autumn. It is, however, advisable to sow the Wimmera Ryegrass separately from the Sweet Clover, and to **soak the seed of the latter** before sowing. See also Brunning's leaflet on Sweet Clover.

8. Q. What subsequent treatment is necessary?

A. If the grass is **required for permanency,** it is advisable to shut up the paddock the first season to give the plants a chance of seeding themselves heavily, but apart from this and an occasional top-dressing with Superphosphate, say, every second or third year, **no special treatment is necessary.**

9. Q. Where do I get the seed?

A. In order to be certain of getting the **genuine true Wimmera Ryegrass,** or Lolium Subulatum, **purchase** your seed **from a reputable house,** and in this respect you cannot do better than secure **Brunning's genuine** contract grown stock. Wimmera Ryegrass has been offered on the market at prices which show such a wide margin that extreme caution is necessary in this respect. **The true seed is generally high in price,** owing to the limited quantity of the genuine article available.

Samples and Quotations, Free on Application.

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